

VZCZCXRO6285
PP RUEHDBU RUEHPW
DE RUEHMO #1525/01 1621127
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 111127Z JUN 09
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3737
INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE
RUEHXD/MOSCOW POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 05 MOSCOW 001525

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/11/2019
TAGS: [PINR](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [AF](#) [RS](#)
SUBJECT: INFORMATION ON RUSSIA'S AFGHANISTAN POLICY MAKERS
(C-RE9-00858)

REF: A. STATE 42846
[1](#)B. MOSCOW 1436

Classified By: Acting Political M/C David Kostelancik for reasons 1.4 (b/d).

[1](#)1. (C) In response to ref A request for information on Russian leaders with influence on GOR Afghan policy, we have provided profiles of MFA officials involved in Russian policy toward Afghanistan. Of the MFA officials listed below, we classify the following as experts on Afghanistan: Aleksandr Maryasov, Director, MFA Second Asia Department; Ali Mustafabeli, Deputy Director, MFA Second Asia Department; Yuri Khokhlov, former Chief of the Afghanistan Section, MFA Second Asia Department (now working on Putin's foreign policy staff); Zamir Kabulov, Ambassador to Afghanistan; and Maksim Peshkov, Director, MFA Third Asia Department. Those working on U.S.-Russia bilateral relations or European cooperation issues are involved in Afghan policy as it relates to the NATO transit agreement and other areas of Russian cooperation with the U.S. and NATO. The fact that the February 10-11 U.S.-Russia consultations on Afghanistan, and the May 27 discussions on a lethal transit agreement, were organized by the European Cooperation Department and North America Department, respectively, appears to confirm our understanding that the GOR views cooperation with the U.S. and NATO to stabilize Afghanistan through the prism of our bilateral relationship.

[1](#)2. (C) The unclassified information listed below is taken from MFA biographies. We have added our assessments of MFA officials' level of involvement in formulating GOR Afghan policy and their attitude toward cooperating with the U.S. and NATO.

AFGHANISTAN AND CENTRAL ASIA

Aleksey Borodavkin - Deputy Foreign Minister

[1](#)3. (U) Aleksey Nikolaevich Borodavkin.
- Born in 1950.
- 1973, graduated from Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO).
- 1975, joined the MFA.
- 1982-1993, worked in various MFA offices and overseas posts.
- 1993-1997, Counselor, then DCM, Russian Embassy in Thailand.
- 1998, Deputy Director, MFA First CIS Department (multilateral organizations in the former Soviet space).
- 1999-2002, Deputy Director, MFA Fourth CIS Department (Caucasus).
- 2002-2004, Ambassador, Russian Embassy in the Slovak Republic.
- 2004-2008, Permanent Representative to the OSCE.
- 2008-present, Deputy Foreign Minister with responsibility for the First Asia Department (East Asia), Second Asia Department (South Asia), Asia-Pacific Region Department

(Southeast Asia), and Asian Issues Department (multilateral organizations).

- Married, three children.

¶4. (C) Borodavkin is the senior MFA official responsible for Afghanistan and South Asia, although he is considered a foreign policy generalist rather than a regional expert. We understand that Borodavkin may head the Russian side during the next bilateral consultations with the U.S. on Afghanistan. In recent meetings with U.S. officials, Borodavkin has cited a new, positive atmosphere regarding Afghanistan, and stressed the need to quickly take advantage of what he termed the "drive" within the Russian leadership to forge closer cooperation with the U.S. on this issue. These exchanges stand in contrast to previous meetings, when Borodavkin expressed the GOR's dissatisfaction with the U.S. response to Russian offers of assistance, particularly the Russian proposal for the Collective Security Treaty Organization to cooperate with NATO as a means to halt narcotics trafficking and the spread of terrorism to Central Asia. Borodavkin has expressed skepticism about U.S. democracy goals in Afghanistan, urging Washington to assert greater control of the presidential elections, for example. Despite the GOR's focus on Afghanistan as it relates to security in Central Asia, the former Soviet republics in this region do not come under Borodavkin but DFM Grigoriy Karasin, who is responsible for the CIS.

Aleksandr Maryasov - Director, MFA Second Asia Department

¶5. (U) Aleksandr Georgiyevich Maryasov.

MOSCOW 00001525 002 OF 005

¶6. (C) Maryasov has been an able interlocutor with visiting U.S. and Embassy officials on issues regarding Afghanistan and Iran. He has been supportive of Russian engagement with the U.S. on Afghanistan and the possibility of enhanced Russian assistance to Kabul. Maryasov has demonstrated skepticism regarding U.S. claims of success in Afghanistan, and appears, along with several of his MFA colleagues, to believe the U.S. naive in pursuing reconciliation with the Taliban. Unlike some of his colleagues, however, Maryasov has used dispassionately diplomatic language to convey this. Judging by Maryasov's background, he is more expert on Iran than Afghanistan, although he and his department weigh heavily in directing bilateral relations with Kabul. Maryasov and the staff of his Department are appreciated by foreign diplomats for their openness and accessibility, in contrast to other MFA departments that are notoriously difficult to work with. We understand that Maryasov will leave his position soon to become Russian Ambassador to Thailand, which one MFA official referred to as his "retirement tour."

Ali Mustafabeli - Deputy Director, MFA Second Asia Department

¶7. (U) Ali Mitkhadovich Mustafabeli

- Served at the Russian Embassy in Iran.
- Speaks Farsi and English.
- Additional biographic information will be reported septel.

¶8. (C) With responsibility for the MFA Afghanistan and Iran sections, Mustafabeli has been a regular Embassy contact who has made himself and his staff available to discuss a variety of issues related to Russia's relations with these key countries. He has remarked about being overloaded with work, and expressed relief that his brief does not include additional issues such as the ISAF transit agreement, which is handled by the European Cooperation Department responsible for NATO issues. Apparently supportive of closer cooperation with the U.S., Mustafabeli has not shied away from expressing his incredulity at what he believes are exaggerated U.S. claims of success in Afghanistan, as well as what he views as U.S. naiveté regarding Afghan national reconciliation and the 1267 delisting process. Mustafabeli posed several tough

questions to the U.S. delegation during the February bilateral consultations, and appeared to mentally tune out of the meeting after failing to receive what he considered adequately frank responses. Mustafabeli has suggested that the U.S. previously pressured the Afghans not to accept Russian offers of assistance, and said it was "your loss" if the U.S. and NATO did not work with the CSTO. Despite his sometimes tart tongue, Mustafabeli has distanced the GOR from some of the more outrageous comments made by the often incendiary Russian Ambassador to Afghanistan, Zamir Kabulov, and other GOR officials. Of note is the fact that Mustafabeli is a Russian Muslim, probably non-Slavic, working in a ministry dominated by Slavs, some of whom may be nominally Orthodox Christian.

Yuri Khokhlov - former Chief, Afghanistan Section, MFA Second Asia Department

¶9. (U) Yuri Aleksandrovich Khokhlov.

- 1992, graduated from the Military Institute, where he trained as a military interpreter for Farsi and English.
- 1992, resigned from the Russian Army after serving only three months and joined the MFA.
- 1992-1998, served at the Russian Embassy in Iran.
- 1998-2008, worked at the MFA Second Asia Department, including as Afghanistan Section Chief.
- 2009-present, deputy to Putin's foreign policy advisor, Ambassador Yuri Ushakov.
- Speaks Farsi and English.
- Married, one child. Has two children from a previous marriage.

MOSCOW 00001525 003 OF 005

¶10. (C) Khokhlov left the MFA in January 2009 to join Putin's foreign policy staff led by former Russian Ambassador to the U.S. Yuri Ushakov (ref B). We were surprised by this move, considering that Khokhlov was a hard charger at the MFA, and appeared to enjoy the level of influence he had there on Afghan policy. Khokhlov served as Secretary of the GOR interagency consultative group on Afghanistan, answering directly to its Chair, FM Lavrov, and was in regular contact with Russian Ambassador Kabulov, with whom he is on a first name basis. Kholkhov is considered an excellent Farsi speaker, and served as Medvedev's interpreter during meetings with Presidents Karzai and Ahmadinijead in 2008. He is a major proponent of closer Russian cooperation with the U.S. on Afghan stabilization, and originated the idea for a small Russian delegation to travel to Washington to discuss potential Russian military assistance to Kabul, which evolved into the February 2009 bilateral consultations in Moscow.

¶11. (C) Khokhlov's permanent replacement has yet to be named, and the Afghan Section has been led by Second Secretary Vitaliy Rugalyov, who served for over two years at the Russian Embassy in Kabul before returning to the MFA to work for the past four years in the Afghanistan Section. Rugalyov has proven to be an excellent contact, providing us with details of the inner-workings of the MFA and GOR in regards to Afghanistan policy. He is married and expects his first child lNV2Xv&xaQmBm7QrQov is well disposed toward the U.S., and told us that he has a sister currently studying medicine at Yale on a scholarship.

Zamir Kabulov - Russian Ambassador to Afghanistan

¶12. (U) Zamir Nubiyevich Kabulov.

- Born in 1]Qn
- CQ01-1992, Counselor at the Soviet, then Russian, Embassy in Afghanistan. Moved to the Russian Embassy in Pakistan after the Mujahadin took control of Kabul and the Embassy there was shut.
- In 1995, Kabulov took part in talks with the Taliban in an attempt to secure the release of the crew of a Russian plane

that was forced to land in Kandahar. He reportedly met with Taliban leader Mohammed Omar.

- 1996-1998, served as a senior political advisor to a special UN mission for Afghanistan based in Pakistan.
- 1998-2004, Deputy Director, MFA Third Asia Department, which then handled South Asia, and served as special MFA representative during the 2001 Bonn talks on Afghanistan.
- 2004-present, Ambassador to Afghanistan.
- Speaks Farsi and English.

¶13. (U) Kabulov has been a persistent critic of U.S. and NATO efforts in Afghanistan, going so far as to accuse the U.S. military of involvement in narcotics trafficking during a 2008 interview. He also agreed with comments made by the head of the Russian anti-drug trafficking agency (FSKN) Viktor Ivanov, who said that the U.S. and NATO were to blame for the rise in Afghan heroin going to Russia. Kabulov has criticized NATO strategy for failing to take into account the interests of Afghanistan and its neighbors. He said NATO had repeated the Soviets' mistakes in Afghanistan, particularly by increasing the number of foreign troops in the country when it should focus on economic reconstruction and rebuilding Afghan security forces.

¶14. (C) Kabulov provided the MFA with what he claimed was evidence that U.S. military advisors in Kabul were sowing suspicion of Russia and advising the Afghans not to work with the GOR on counter-narcotics training or accept military assistance. Kabulov's personal knowledge of leading figures in Afghanistan, including Taliban, has given him great sway within the MFA, which he advises to be wary of national reconciliation efforts.

¶15. (C) We understand that Kabulov will soon leave his position to become Director of the MFA Second Asia Department. While Kabulov's previous criticism of the U.S. suggests that this move could complicate our cooperation on Afghanistan, we believe that the MFA's policy to enhance engagement with the U.S. on this issue has already been set.

Maksim Peshkov - Director, MFA Third CIS Department

MOSCOW 00001525 004 OF 005

¶16. (U) Maksim Aleksandrovich Peshkov.

- Born in 1950.
- 1972, graduated from MGIMO and joined in the MFA.
- 1972-1975, Attache, Soviet Consulate in Resht, Iran.
- 1981-1985 Second Secretary, Soviet Embassy in Afghanistan.
- 1991-1992, Counselor, Russian Embassy in Afghanistan.
- 1994-2000, Section Chief, then Deputy Director, MFA Third CIS Department.
- 2000-2005, Russian Ambassador to Tajikistan.
- 2005-present, Director, MFA Third CIS Department (Central Asia).
- Speaks Farsi and English.
- Grandson of Soviet writer Maxim Gorky.

¶17. (C) The extent of Peshkov's role in MFA deliberations on Afghanistan is unclear, although with responsibility for the former Soviet states that border Afghanistan, he is likely weighing in on the issue. Peshkov balances a concern with the threat Afghanistan presents to Central Asian stability with what Russia sees as a need to keep an eye on the U.S. presence in the region. When asked by a senior U.S. official about Russia's role in Bishkek's decision to close the Manas airbase, Peshkov commented that the U.S. use of assets such as Manas must be viewed in a larger context that takes into account Russian concerns that the U.S. and NATO are surrounding it.

U.S.-RUSSIA BILATERAL

Sergey Ryabkov - Deputy Foreign Minister

¶18. (U) Sergey Yevgenyevich Ryabkov.

- Born in 1960.
- 1982, graduated from MGIMO and joined the MFA.
- 1982-1995, worked in various MFA offices and overseas posts.
- 1995-1999, OSCE Section Chief, MFA European Cooperation Department.
- 1999-2002, Senior Counselor, Russian Embassy in the U.S.
- 2002-2005, DCM, Russian Embassy in the U.S.
- 2005-2008, Director, MFA European Cooperation Department.
- 2008-present, Deputy Foreign Minister with responsibility for the MFA North American Department, Latin American Department, and Department of Security Affairs and Disarmament.
- Speaks English and Dutch.
- Married, two children.

¶19. (C) As the senior MFA official responsible for bilateral relations with the U.S., Ryabkov appears well disposed toward cooperating with us on Afghanistan. He opened the February consultations on Afghanistan on a distinctly positive note that was maintained throughout much of the course of the discussions. Ryabkov suggested during the consultations that the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) was the best forum for further discussions on Afghanistan stabilization, and suggested formation of a NRC working group on Afghan-related issues. Other MFA officials have indicated, however, that the NRC was not the optimal forum for such discussions and the GOR preferred engaging in a special dialogue directly with the U.S. on Afghan issues, which may reflect a bureaucratic tug of war between DFMs Ryabkov and Borodavkin. Following discussions in May regarding a possible lethal transit agreement, Ryabkov suggested that creative solutions could be found to overcome differences between the two sides. Apart from bilateral cooperation with the U.S. on Afghanistan, it is unlikely that Ryabkov focuses much of his attention on Afghanistan policy, as his portfolio includes talks with the U.S. on missile defense and strategic arms control, and international efforts to halt the Iranian nuclear program.

Igor Neverov - Director, MFA North America Department

¶20. (U) Igor Svyatoslavovich Neverov.

- Born in 1956.
- 1978 graduated from MGIMO and joined the MFA.
- 1978-1984 worked at the Soviet Embassy to the U.S.
- 1984-1987 worked on the U.S. desk in the MFA North America Department.
- 1987-1992, Second Secretary, Soviet and Russian Embassy to the U.S.
- 1992-1994, Counselor, MFA North America Department.
- 1994-1998, Deputy Director, MFA North America Department.
- 1998-2002, Minister, Russian Embassy in the U.S.
- 2003-present, Director, MFA North America Department.
- Speaks English, Spanish and French.
- Married, two daughters.

MOSCOW 00001525 005 OF 005

¶21. (C) Like Ryabkov, Neverov's involvement in GOR Afghanistan policy comes through Russian cooperation with the U.S. on this issue. Neverov is an excellent interlocutor, and, as demonstrated by his positive handling of the May 27 talks on a potential lethal transit agreement, is committed to enhancing engagement with the U.S. on Afghanistan. He has spent nearly his entire career focused on the U.S., and is the MFA's leading "America hand."

Vladimir Voronkov, Director, MFA European Cooperation Department

¶22. (U) Vladimir Ivanovich Voronkov.

- Born in 1953.

- 1975, graduated from Moscow State University. Earned a PhD. in history (no date).
- 1989, joined the MFA.
- 2000-2002, Deputy Chief of Mission, Russian Embassy in Poland.
- 2002-2005, Deputy Director, Personnel Department, MFA.
- 2005-2008, Deputy Permanent Representative at the OSCE.
- 2008-present, Director, MFA General European Cooperation Department.
- Speaks Polish and English.
- Married, two children.

¶23. (C) The European Cooperation Department is involved with GOR Afghanistan policy as it relates to transit agreements with NATO members and the OSCE's Afghan programs. Voronkov played a prominent role during the February bilateral consultations, but was absent from more recent talks on a lethal transit agreement that is being negotiated bilaterally. The North America Department has taken over the lead on this issue. If the GOR chooses to pursue an enhanced dialogue on Afghanistan at the NATO-Russia Council, Voronkov and his department may play a more prominent role.

Yuri Gorlatch, Deputy Director, MFA European Cooperation Department

¶24. (U) Yuri Andreevich Gorlatch

- Biographic information will be reported septel.

¶25. (C) Gorlatch was the principal working level official managing conclusion of the non-lethal transit agreement. His main focus is on NATO-Russia Council issues, and appears to be genuinely interested in enhancing NATO-Russia relations. He is friendly and accessible, typically agreeing to meet on short notice, although not always fully responsive to questions.

BEYRLE